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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
MFA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

BY

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MASTER OF FINE ARTS

IN

PRINTMAKING

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of
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Final Visual Presentation

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GRADUATE STUDIES

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I hereby release the following works for incorporation into the University Collections, University of Alberta, as part of the Master of Fine Arts Thesis Collection:

TITLE	DATE	MEDIUM	SIZE
Placelessness III Value: \$400.00	2008	Etching, mezzotint, chine collé	24" x 30"
Placelessness IV Value: \$400.00	2008	Etching, mezzotint, chine collé	24" x 30"
Durable because it contains Value: \$500.00	2008	Ink and graphite transfer, chine collé, coffee	18" x 24"

Object

It must have an odd object to begin with.

Now the ghost of its uses

Whisper around my head, tickle the tips

Of my fingers. Weeds

Reclaim with quick silence, the beams, pillars,

Doorways. Places change, and a small object

Stands defiant in its placelessness.

Durable because it contains intensely meanings

Which it can no longer pour out.

-Jimmie Durham, "Object". (1964),
in *A Certain Lack of Coherence. Writings
on Art and Cultural Politics*. Jean
Fisher, ed., London: Kala Press,
1993.

Between Struggle and Spare

My thesis work consists of drawings, prints and works on canvas that depict found objects that I have collected during visits to antique stores and on daily walks in and around the city. Chosen objects, such as old animal muzzles, nets, traps, rusted wire and fragmented pieces of metal are for me, remnants or traces of human culture. Further, they act as symbols for our complex relationships with the land and with the animals with which we share our existence. It is my intent to create works that allow for illusion and an open-ended quality, inviting viewers to speculate on implied narratives as well as possible symbolic associations with the objects rendered within the compositions.

The drawings and print works explore themes of anthropomorphism, human transformation and transience. Through tracing and transfer processes I am speaking to universal existence while addressing the object's individual spirit or 'anima'. Objects are continually in a state of emergence and disappearance. When objects reveal themselves, and then retreat, this hints at alternate worlds or realities such as dream worlds, the subconscious or spirit worlds. The fragile quality of the drawing embodies feelings of loss and also suggests a state of ongoing transformation. In addition, fragmentation, layering and placement of the objects highlight this loss and the disconnection we have with animals, land and each other.

The suggestion of landscape in these works, in which place, memory and time are examined, brings attention to how the objects navigate between multiple worlds. The objects interact in their created environments representing the connections we have to our universe. Recurring motifs such as muzzles, snouts, fences and old animal powered equipment are charged with meaning and can evoke many associations. For me, they represent the anxieties of our world and its progress.

Landscape can symbolize dream states, destruction and devastation and humankind's essential bond with nature, and also function as both a universal metaphor and as a personal symbol. My work, then, explores this space where vestiges of memories, objects and time are intertwined and become united within the picture plane. This place for me becomes a sanctuary where personal, political and social issues can be played out.

Jewel Shaw

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